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1. Background

The Schoolcare Program is a service provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) in partnership with the Royal Children’s Hospital, RCH @ Home, which provides Victorian government school staff with the skills to support students who have complex medical needs.

The Schoolcare Program enables students with ongoing complex medical needs to have their health care requirements met safely at school. This is done by providing training to the school staff that care for them. This service provides specialist training to staff who deliver interventional medical care to students whilst they are attending school.

Student Health Support

The majority of health care needs for students are managed by schools utilising existing resources, and a referral to the Schoolcare Program is not appropriate.

A Student Health Support Plan (or in the case of Anaphylaxis an Anaphylaxis Management Plan) is required for any student with an identified health care need, guided by medical advice received by the student’s medical/health practitioner and developed in consultation with the student and student’s parents/carers.

Detailed advice and disability specific Student Health Support Plan templates are available in the Schools Reference Guide for a range of conditions; including epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibrosis, anaphylaxis, and diabetes (Section 4.5 Student Health) at:


Schools seeking professional development or training relating to the support needs of students with epilepsy should contact the Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria on 1300 852 853 or epilepsy@epilepsy.asn.au. Curriculum materials and classroom support are also available.

Schoolcare Program Eligibility Requirements

The Schoolcare Program is available to students with complex medical care needs who require interventional medical procedures during the school day and where the staff members require specific training in order to be able to perform these procedures. This program is available where the student would not be able to attend school without the procedure being performed. A list of example support procedures for which specific training is provided via the Schoolcare Program is included in Attachment 1.

Eligibility is based on the student’s medical condition and his or her medical care needs while attending school, and is determined by the Schoolcare Program staff at RCH @ Home, Royal Children’s Hospital.
2. Application Process

Student Support Groups

A Student Support Group must be established and maintained to plan and implement the educational support program for the student. A Student Support Group is a cooperative partnership between the parent/guardian/carers, school representatives and professionals to ensure coordinated support for the student's educational needs.

The Student Support Group will have a key role in advising the principal on the educational program for the student and the nature of the resources required to support the student's medical needs.


Submitting the documentation

Referrals to the Schoolcare Program must be submitted by a Victorian government school and must be completed jointly with the student's parent/guardian/carers and the medical practitioner.


Completed applications should be mailed to the following address:

Schoolcare Program
Resources Coordination Group
Student Wellbeing Division
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
GPO Box 4367, Melbourne 3001

It is essential that all necessary details are included in the referral form. The following checklist sets out the required documentation.

☐ Completion of parts A, B and C of the referral form
☐ Attachment of statement of the student’s medical condition completed by their medical practitioner (if available).

Existing Schoolcare Program Students

In order for RCH@Home staff to deliver relevant and appropriate training, the Schoolcare Program Referral Form must be submitted each year to ensure an accurate profile of a student’s current medical needs is obtained. It is recommended that the referral form be submitted prior to the commencement of each school year to assist the RCH@Home staff with program delivery planning.

3. Administration Process

The referring school will be notified of receipt of the application by the Student Wellbeing Division. This confirmation will be sent to the nominated contact person as identified on the Schoolcare Referral Form. This notification does not confirm eligibility for the Schoolcare Program.

After the referral has been received by the Student Wellbeing Division it will be forwarded to the Schoolcare Program, Royal Children's Hospital who will determine eligibility for the program.

Once eligibility has been confirmed, the Schoolcare Program will contact the nominated contact person at the school to arrange a suitable time to provide the training. If the referral is not appropriate for the Schoolcare program, the school will be contacted and provided with advice regarding other suitable support arrangements.
4. Training Provided

Training is provided to the school staff with responsibility for caring for the student. In most instances, this will be the Education Support staff. It is recommended that the training is provided to a small number of staff members (e.g. 2-4) who have ongoing contact with the student.

Schoolcare Program educators will aim to offer group sessions to Education Support staff, where possible. To assist an efficient service, it is recommended that schools make appropriate arrangements to ensure that Education Support staff are available for the training.

There are two levels of training provided and this is based on the complexity of the student’s medical needs.

**Level 1** involves the development of a care plan and training program, an education session, a training session and a follow-up review after 6 weeks.

**Level 2** is appropriate for more complex medical needs with longer training sessions and includes the development of a care plan, a general education session, theory training, individual supervision, a follow-up session after 6 weeks and a review after 6 months.

The level of training provided will be determined by the Schoolcare Program staff.

5. Further Information

**Websites**

Schools Reference Guide (Section 4.5 Student Health)

Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria
http://www.epinet.org.au/default/education_training

Schoolcare Program - RCH @ Home
Tel: (03) 9345 7983

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Student Wellbeing Division
33 St Andrews Place
East Melbourne 3002
Telephone: (03) 9637 2019
Email: disability.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

**Regional Offices**

Schools may contact their Regional Disabilities Coordinator for support with their application.

- **Barwon South Western Region**
  - Phone: (03) 5225 1000 or www.bsw.vic.edu.au

- **Eastern Metropolitan Region**
  - Phone: (03) 9265 2400 or www.emr.vic.edu.au

- **Gippsland Region**
  - Phone: (03) 5127 0400 or www.gippsland.vic.edu.au

- **Grampians Region**
  - Phone: (03) 5337 8444 or www.grampians.vic.edu.au

- **Hume Region**
  - Phone: (03) 5761 2100 or www.hume.vic.edu.au

- **Loddon Mallee Region**
  - Phone: (03) 5440 3111 or www.lcmdoe.vic.edu.au

- **Northern Metropolitan Region**
  - Phone: (03) 9488 9488 or www.nmr.vic.edu.au

- **Southern Metropolitan Region**
  - Phone: (03) 9794 3555 or www.smr.vic.edu.au

- **Western Metropolitan Region**
  - Phone: (03) 9291 6500 or www.education.vic.gov.au/region/western/
Attachment 1

The following list includes examples of the procedures for which Schoolcare Program training is provided:

**Oxygen**
- maintenance of oxygen supply and tube patency
- maintaining skin integrity, in the case of nasal cannulas and face masks
- ensuring appropriate humidification
- observation of child’s general health status and adjustment of oxygen level according to set criteria
- awareness of dangers of oxygen therapy and prevention of complications
- change of oxygen cylinders as required

**Tracheostomy care**
- infection control
- use of correct humidification
- ensuring clear airway and using suction and saline as required
- ability to effect efficient tube change if unable to be cleared of blockage
- implementation of emergency procedures around respiratory needs as required

**Suction**
- infection control
- knowledge of when to suction and why
- use of correct suctioning technique for specific child
- awareness of specific types of mucus to observe for and reporting of abnormalities to relevant people
- prevention of complications of incorrect suction procedure—vomiting, aspiration and damage to mucous membrane

**Tube feeding (nasogastric or gastrostomy feeding)**
- infection control
- use of correct methods to check position of nasogastric tube
- administering correct volumes of feed at regular intervals, at correct rate and temperature, specific to individual child
- use of feeding pump as required
- ensuring stomach is empty of excess air
- cleaning of equipment

**Ostomy management (various openings that allow for emptying of urine or faecal content)**
- urine output
- infection control
- intermittent insertion of catheter into bladder via urethral catheter
- regular drainage (e.g. every two to four hours) of urine via suprapubic bladder openings (vesicostomy or mitrofanoffs)

**Management of faecal output**
- ileostomy and colostomy management
- regular emptying of pouch
- changing of pouch as required
- adequate protection of the stoma
- appropriate surrounding skin care management
- complete flange changes, as required